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ART. X.—*General History of the Christian Religion and Church.* From the German of DR. AUGUSTUS NEANDER. Translated by JOSEPH TORREY, Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy in the University of Vermont. Boston: Crocker & Brewster. 1853–54. 5 vols. 12mo. pp. 740, 768, 626, 650, 415.

WE envy the Romish Church in no respect so much as in her privilege of canonization. There are some saints for whom we are not satisfied with private reverence,—the knowledge or memory of whose virtues we are not willing to trust to the channels and chances of literature alone. We would have them revered by those who seldom read, and held in honor long after their biographies in the common course of nature will pass into oblivion. We wish that there were some authority which could invest their brows with the *nimbus* for all coming ages, make them as guiding stars to shine out for ever from the galaxy of less conspicuous merit, render their names the acknowledged property of the whole Church, and endow them posthumously with a sort of official relation to their successors in the remotest generations on the arena of Christian activity. We would not object to a calendar full of such beacon-marks,—to a saint for every day, the recurrence of whose anniversary might excite curiosity, elicit inquiry, keep the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Church Universal within the general knowledge of the religious public, and call forth the “*Ora pro nobis*” in the sense in which the Protestant no less than the Romanist believes that his prayers may be upborne and seconded by the pure intercessions of those who worship on the other side of the veil. On the golden register, were we to choose our own particular saint among those who have labored for God and man since St. Paul assumed the crown of martyrdom, we know not but that the lot might fall on Neander.

Religious journalists are fond of likening this greatest Christian scholar of the age to the Apostle John. In our esteem, his character presents many more points of resemblance to St. Paul. We like not, indeed, the contrast in

which these two Apostles are often placed. Paul seems to us no less tender and fervent, no less endowed with all the finer, richer, loftier traits of the emotional nature Godward and manward, than John. The countenance but once beheld by the former in miraculous vision on the way to Damascus was no less phototyped on his soul, than on that of him who had often beheld it, both in agony and glory; and the love of Christ was equally with both the constraining motive, the crowning joy of life. But Paul had a depth of learning, a range of thought, a dialectic subtilty and cogency, a mastery of all rhetorical resources, an eloquence which ran through the entire gamut of human susceptibilities profound and lofty, to which "the beloved disciple" made no approach; and in these attributes our saintly German theologian certainly rose nearer to his level than any man of our times, if not of all modern Christendom. We find that his character as a Christian believer affects us in very much the same way with that of the "Apostle to the Gentiles." Among the external evidences of the authenticity of the history and the divine power of the doctrines of the Christian revelation, we regard as second to none the simple fact, that Paul, in our esteem the greatest man that God ever made, was a Christian, and was not ashamed to own it. Neander took his place among the learned men of Germany at a period when faith in Jesus of Nazareth, in any intelligible sense of those words, was as sure a ground of reproach and obloquy as it was in the first two centuries among the cultivated minds of Athens and Rome,—when the genius and erudition of the German universities and pulpits were divided between a rationalism that resolved the supernatural in the sacred writings into an inflated and ambitious style in the narration of natural and ordinary occurrences, a pseudo-spiritualism which veiled its infidelity under symbolical and mythical interpretation, and a pantheism which ignored exegesis and adhered to the Church for the sake of its offices and emoluments. The unsophisticated belief of miracle and prophecy was identified with intellectual narrowness, and the suspicion of piety cast doubt on the learning and a deep shadow on the reputation of a theologian. In such a condition of things, it is no slight

testimony to the impregnableness of the Christian evidences, and to the specific levity of the accumulated doubts and objections of eighteen centuries, that the very man in all Germany who had taken the most thorough, comprehensive, and philosophical survey of the religious history of the world, and whose mental scope and acumen were the most fully adequate to so arduous a research, assumed and retained his position as a believer in the integrity of the Christian Scriptures and the divine mission of their central personage. His faith reassures our own. It at least convinces us that the human mind has not outgrown Christianity.

The analogy between St. Paul and Neander extends even to style. Neander often piles up, like Paul, massive sentences, full of parenthetical and qualifying clauses, presenting his idea simultaneously in all its "many-sidedness," and welding defence to statement, so that the very statement is first made in its complete polemic form. He abounds in digressions, not desultory or purposeless, but foraging excursions often into remote regions, from which he returns with a wealth of illustration or argument to render the direct current of his discourse deeper, fuller, more emphatic, and more decisive. But, like the Apostle, he never loses himself in side issues, or finally drops a subject till he has exhausted its merits, or its uses for the case in hand. As with St. Paul, too, his logic is all charged with the latent fires of a devout enthusiasm; the under-current of profound religious feeling is continually rising to the surface; and the most abstruse discussions, if not, as in the Pauline Epistles, interspersed with doxologies in set form, are often broken in upon by traits of sentiment that make us aware of the perpetual co-activity of the writer's intellectual and religious nature, and call upon us to worship with him while we are illumined by the lucidness and borne on by the cogency of his reasoning.

Neander might be said, without exaggeration, to have been providentially trained for the work of an ecclesiastical historian. He was born of Jewish parents, and was educated in the Hebrew faith. Dissatisfied with this, he sought refuge in Platonism, and, finding there no adequate ground of repose, he returned to the ancient Scriptures of his nation, and followed

their prophetic indications till they led him to the manger of Bethlehem. He thus approached Christianity *ab extra*, and could the more fully appreciate the contents of its revelation from his experience in other regions of actual or tentative belief. His own consciousness interpreted to him alike the limited reception and the general rejection of the new religion among the Jews, — alike the almost Christian element in Plato's philosophy, and the tendencies that erected Neo-Platonism into a citadel for enfeebled Paganism. It was, no doubt, in part to his personal history, no less than to his noble nature, that he was indebted for the catholicity of his sympathies. Conscious of honesty and of the possession of important truth before he became a Christian, he was prepared to do ample justice to integrity of purpose under the various forms of dogmatic error, and to recognize the Christian verities, of which the wildest heresies are often but one-sided views and exaggerated statements. It was, no doubt, his diversified religious experience, together with a profound consciousness of the immeasurable worth of Christianity, in any form, above any negation of it or substitute for it, that dictated the following comment on the passage in the Epistle to the Philippians in which St. Paul expresses his joy at the preaching of the Gospel by his personal enemies and theological opponents.

“It implies a love purified from selfishness far above what is common, to be able to recognize and with joy to acknowledge the work of the Lord, when performed through the agency of a personal enemy. But the power of this purified and exalted love reveals itself under still another view, when the truth lying at the basis of even an erroneous representation of the Gospel is recognized and welcomed; when the seed of truth is not rejected and spurned on account of the error, even though this may oppose itself to a purer, more complete, unmutated conception of the Gospel as preached by ourselves, but is welcomed as one step towards the further advancement of the Gospel. But how seldom do we find a like example! One who is capable, it may be, of joyfully welcoming the work of the Lord when advanced by means of a personal enemy, might yet not be able so far to forget self as to accept with cordial love, and to use for the common cause of the Lord, the truth lying at the bottom of the errors promulgated by his opponent, especially when in direct opposition to the pure truth which he is himself conscious of preaching. How different would it have been in the

Church, how many divisions might have been avoided, how many who have labored only to oppose each other might have labored together for the spread of the Gospel, — how many who have hardened themselves in their errors, and have lost by degrees even so much of divine truth as they had embraced, might from that partial view have been led farther and farther in the knowledge of the truth, and have been gradually made free from the bondage of error, — if Christians, instead of demanding everything at once, with the impatient zeal of a love not sufficiently purified from self, had been more observant of the various grades of faith and knowledge, and had nurtured them with a forbearing charity."

Let it not be inferred, however, that Neander's charity was that of indifference, — that his personal convictions were of that elastic tissue which can adapt itself with equal ease to creeds complex and simple, rigid and latitudinarian. The position of such a thinker would be as unfavorable for the work of an ecclesiastical historian, as a wave-rocked ship for minute astronomical calculations. One must have fixity as to his own belief and sympathies, in order to behold divergent and antagonistic modes of faith in their mutual bearings. The heartlessness which ignores the diversities of sects, and the breadth of soul which can comprehend them all, are at opposite poles of the moral universe; and because Neander had the latter, he was at the farthest possible remove from the former. He was a firm champion of supernaturalism, and his "Life of Jesus," elicited by the celebrated work of Strauss bearing the same name, though not polemic, but expository in its form, embodies in our apprehension the noblest defence of historical Christianity ever written, if that may be called a defence which removes its object beyond the reach of assault. His doctrinal belief, as indicated in his works, accords for the most part with the symbolic formulæ of the Lutheran Church; but he expressed a strong repugnance for written creeds, and it was manifest that his mind gave no lodgement to such technical dogmas as could not be transmuted into sentiment or motive, and incorporated into the life of the soul. In this regard he may be classed with Arnold and Bunsen, and like them he held perpetually in view a "Church of the future," whose bond of union should be, not formal or ritual, but spiritual.

In addition to these high qualifications for his great life-

work, he enjoyed the most ample opportunities that the world afforded for his chosen department of study, and was permitted to pursue his labors continuously and uninterruptedly from youth to death. At the age of seventeen he commenced his university course at Halle; at twenty-two he became Professor at Heidelberg; and two years later entered upon his duties as a Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, where he remained till his decease, in his sixty-second year. He lived without care; indeed, was so unobservant of external affairs as to be dependent on the constant guardianship of his sister, while his chief society was that of his colleagues and pupils, with whom he was wont to discuss the themes which occupied his hours of study. He commonly delivered two or three courses of lectures during each academic year, embracing the several departments of Church History, Exegesis, Dogmatic Theology, and Christian Ethics; but his lectures were always extemporaneous, and thus spared him the necessity of writing for immediate use, while their wide range fell entirely within the scope of his historical researches, and only served to give added breadth, solidity, and completeness to his survey of the Christian ages. His incessant industry ceased only with his life. He delivered his last lecture within a week of his death, and dictated some sentences of his history but a few moments before he sank into the quiet slumber in which his spirit passed from earth. His amanuensis wrote from his lips the characteristic sentence: "Thus far in general;—afterwards there comes the further development." He then asked the hour; said, "I am weary,—I will now go to sleep,—good night"; and spoke no more.

The work before us was literally the labor of Neander's whole life. His numerous other publications were most of them monographs on individual topics of ecclesiastical history, commencing with a "Treatise on Julian and his Times," issued when he was but twenty-three years of age. Of his exegetical writings we have read only his Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians, which is less a textual interpretation, than an exhibition of the Pauline element in Christian theology as a working force in the life of the Church. His "Life of Jesus," to which we have already referred, has for its full title,

“The Life of Jesus Christ in its Historical Connections,” and constitutes probably the most carefully arranged chronological epitome of the Gospel narratives extant in any language, while for its critical value we prize it more than all other commentaries covering the same ground within our reach, and in its spiritual intuition it seems to bring us so very near to the heart of the Redeemer, as on that score to justify the comparison, else inadequate, of the author with the beloved disciple who leaned on his Master’s bosom. His “History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church under the Apostles” is an expansion of that one portion of the general history, and reproduces in lifelike colors the aspects of the apostolic age, so that he who reads it finds a flood of light poured upon the Acts of the Apostles, and upon the various controversies, and the crises and exigencies of the infant Church, which furnished the subject-matter for the epistolary portions of the New Testament. In fine, no modern scholar seems to us to have had so vivid and realizing conceptions as Neander, of Christianity, as it first uttered itself in the words and outtrayed itself in the divine life of its Founder, as it was embodied in the convictions, policy, and administration of his immediate followers, and as it came in contact with the various pre-existing forms of religion and philosophy. He thus was pre-eminently qualified to trace the flow of Christian doctrine and influence from its sacred fountains down through its discoloring channels of transmission, through ages of darkness and eras of renewed light, through corruptions, heresies, and partial reformatations, to these latter days, in which its still divided current rolls on to become one again in that happier future foreshadowed in the Saviour’s prayer at the Last Supper.

Of the Church History the first volume appeared in 1826. Four subsequent volumes followed at intervals, and received the finishing touches of the author’s hand. A sixth volume (the fifth in the Translation before us) was left in a somewhat fragmentary condition, and was prepared for the press by his pupil, friend, and frequent assistant, K. F. Th. Schneider. In executing this delicate office, the editor, with a truly filial modesty, has confined himself to such critical emendations

as the author himself would have made, without attempting to supply the portions of the work which, however carefully elaborated, would still have shown the absence of the master's hand. Professor Torrey's Translation is well worthy of its original. He had to encounter the difficulties of an ultra-German style, involved, strongly idiomatic, and not unfrequently difficult of interpretation from the intense condensation of thought,—obscure from "excess of light." These difficulties were of course enhanced by the superior affluence of the German tongue, alike in the vocabulary of mental and spiritual science, and in terminations and constructions that express graduated shades of significance. We name these obstacles only to say that the volumes under review show no traces of them. Though the translator has neither added, omitted, nor altered so much as a sentence, he has reproduced the entire work, not in an Anglo-German, but in a purely English form, in a style marked equally by perspicuity, elegance, and ease. Such a version can be made only by one who occupies the same plane of intellect with the author; and we cannot sufficiently admire the self-abnegation of a man of so distinguished ability and culture, in consenting to lend his own mind simply as the translucent medium for another's thought and the vehicle of another's fame. The work, as we have it, does honor to American literature, and as a scholarly enterprise demanding and exhibiting the highest order of qualification, it only and hardly occupies a second rank as compared with the original productions in the department of secular history which have achieved so much for our national reputation.

We have double reason to be grateful to Professor Torrey, on the score of the long-felt need which he has supplied and the deplorable void which he has filled. Prior to this publication there existed not in the English language an Ecclesiastical History adequate to the wants of the theologian or the general scholar. It is an indisputable fact that Mosheim (not as travestied by Maclaine, but as translated and edited by Professor Murdock) furnishes more authentic renderings of the memorials of Christian antiquity, and sounder judgments on matters in controversy, than any original English

writer in the same field. But he wrote a century ago; and since his days not only has there been a great accumulation of materials, but the very philosophy of history has sprung into being. Mosheim only collected existing records; but did not put his witnesses to the rack, confront them with the circumstances and influences that must have deflected their literal veracity, and deduce from what their testimony was what it should have been. Neander was of kindred genius with Niebuhr. In historical research he always goes behind documentary evidence to such considerations as determine its validity and weight, and summons the recognized laws and limitations of human nature and experience to his aid in the interpretation of ambiguous, or the choice between conflicting testimonies.

But let it not be imagined that this is a work adapted only to the needs of professed theologians. It cannot fail to command the profound and thankful interest of every intelligent reader. It is sufficiently minute in detail, deals largely in biographical anecdote, enters lovingly into the spirit of the successive ages in all that challenges the humane or religious sympathies, and, while it is eminently philosophical, never overlays fact with speculation, or warps historical truth into harmony with preconceived theories.

The first volume commences with a sketch of the religious condition of the world, Roman, Greek, Pagan, and Jewish, at the time when Christianity was first promulgated. Then follows the history of the constitution, discipline, and schisms of the Church, down to the period of the Novatian controversy. To this succeeds what to many readers will be second to no other portion of the work in interest and value,—a picture of the life and worship of the primitive Christians, comprising their sentiments and habits with regard to domestic concerns, arts and trades, dress, public amusements, military service, and slavery, as also their modes of admitting disciples, conducting their public assemblies, and administering the ordinances of the Gospel. We next have a thorough analysis of dogmatic theology as it was developed in the main body of the Church, and as it diverged thence, on the one hand towards Judaism, and on the other towards the

philosophy of the East, and was then subdivided into various heresies, each deriving its name and type from some distinguished heresiarch. The volume closes with the lives of the Church Fathers from Barnabas to Origen. Next to the first volume, the fifth, unfinished though it be, seems to us to contain the largest amount of important and interesting matter, embodying, as it does, a full narrative of the life, services, and sufferings of Wicklif, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and, as regards Wicklif, presenting a striking contrast to the narrow and unappreciative, though laudatory, Memoir by Le Bas. The author was spared to bring his history only down to the dawning of the Protestant Reformation. We know of no living man capable of wielding the *cæstus* which dropped from his hand in death. D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation" takes up the narrative where Neander left it, and as a popular work, blending the parenetic with the historical element, it is worthy the currency which it has had in the original and in its English version; but in profoundness of research and in impartial judgment it bears no comparison with the volumes under review. Neander has shown the world how ecclesiastical history must be written, and if he has established a standard which few can hope to attain, he has at least furnished a model which cannot lack zealous and emulous imitators.

ART. XI. — *Works of FISHER AMES, with a Selection from his Speeches and Correspondence.* Edited by his Son, SETH AMES. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1854. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 406, 442.

MORE than a generation — nearly fifty years — has passed since the eminent orator, scholar, and patriot, whose name gives the title to these volumes, was gathered to his fathers in the quiet village of Dedham, amid the tears of friends and the unfeigned sorrow of all. Soon after his death, a single volume of essays and speeches was published, with an elegant and discriminating biographical sketch by President Kirk-